

J·M·BARRIE'S PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS



RETOLD FOR LITTLE PEOPLE

Barrie

10,427

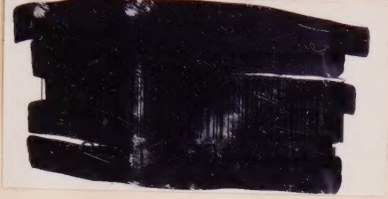
Community Library

Ketchum, Idaho

RULES

1. Books may be kept two weeks and may be renewed once for the same period, except 7 day books and magazines.
2. A fine of two cents a day will be charged on each book which is not returned according to the above rule. No book will be issued to any person incurring such a fine until it has been paid.
3. All injuries to books, beyond reasonable wear, and all losses shall be made good to the satisfaction of the Librarian.
4. Each borrower is held responsible for all books drawn on his card and for all fines accruing on the same.





Date Due

AUG 10 1977

OCT 4 1978

AUG 28 1985

DEC 02 1995

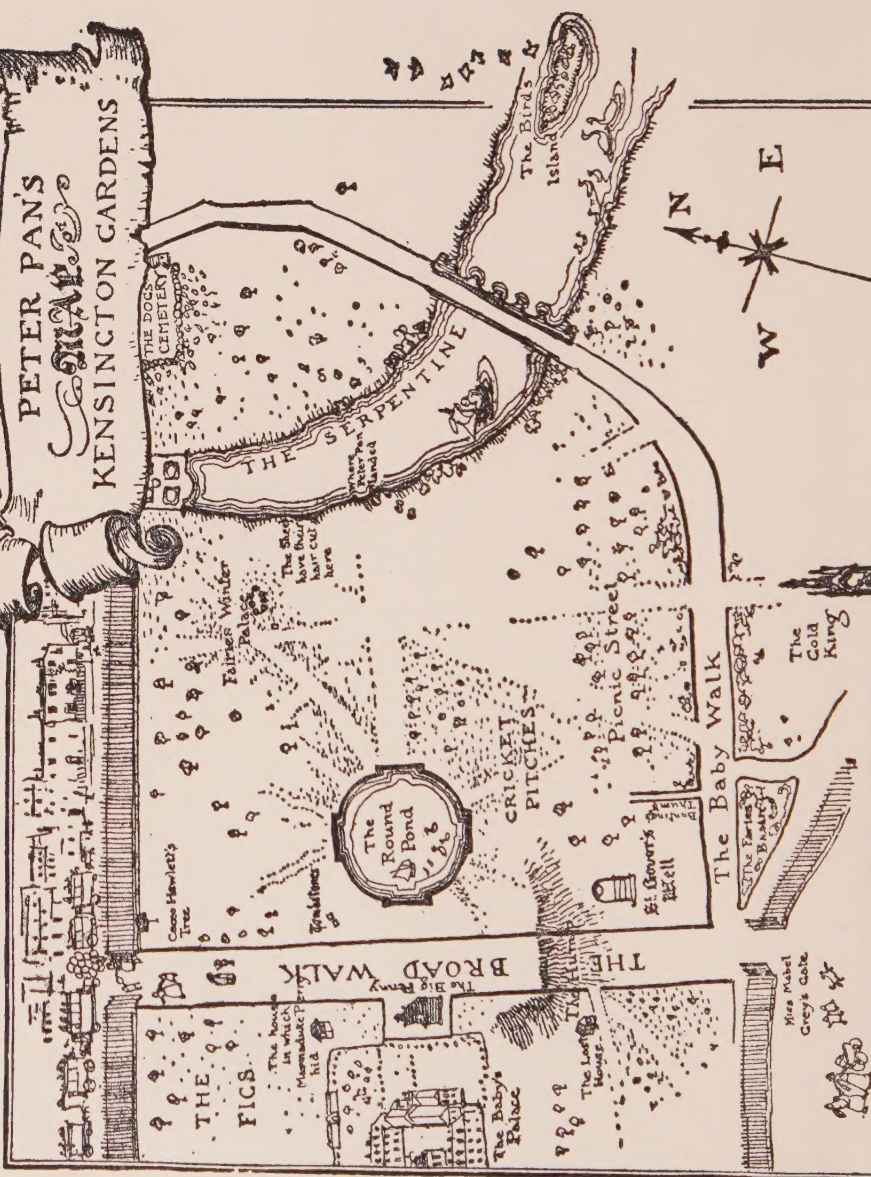


PRINTED IN U. S. A.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

PETER PAN'S KENSINGTON GARDENS



THE BIG POND

THE FIGS

The House in which Marmalade Fairy hid

The Baby's Palace

The Little House

THE

Miss Mabel Grey's Gate

The Baby Walk

The Gold King

St. George's Well

CRICKET PITCHES

Picnic Street

Fairies' Winter Palace

The Dogs have their hair cut here

The Round Pond

THE SERPENTINE

The Birds' Island

THE DOGS' CEMETERY

PETER PAN IN
KENSINGTON GARDENS



J.M.BARRIE'S PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

RETOLD BY MAY BYRON
FOR LITTLE PEOPLE WITH THE
PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR

PICTURES BY
ARTHUR RACKHAM



NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

COPYRIGHT, 1906, BY

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

COPYRIGHT, 1934, BY

JAMES M. BARRIE

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

Retold by May Byron for Little People

COPYRIGHT, 1930, BY

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

I-5.60[V]

Printed in the United States of America

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
Building the house for Maimie	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Kensington Gardens are full of dogs, and fairies, and children	11
He still thought he was a bird	15
Old Solomon Caw, the raven	17
It amused the birds to see him lifting the crusts to his mouth with his hands	19
The Gardens remained as far away as ever	24
He would make the most beautiful music, while the fairies danced madly around him	31
In the daytime the fairies are there	37
Maimie and Tony were often in Kensington Gardens	57
Not many people were about the place	61
She took them for walks up the Baby Walk and back again	72
They just went straight on, following their noses	75
A beautiful fairy girl	80
Certainly plainer than most fairies	82
Feeling dancey all of a sudden	87
Peter rides on it every night	122

PETER PAN IN
KENSINGTON GARDENS

PART I

WHEN Peter Pan was seven days old—just one week, you know—he found out how never to get any older. This is partly managed by having no birthdays : which perhaps is a pity, because birthdays are often very useful, with cards, and cakes, and presents, and happy returns, and so on. But a really manly baby wants other things as well. Peter Pan did, and when he was a week old, and could see the trees of Kensington Gardens, a long way off, he very much wished to get there. He wished so hard, that it was almost as bad as a tooth-ache : but, of course, he did not think of that, not having any teeth so far. He wished, and wished—and made up his mind. In

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

two ticks he was out through the open window, and perched a moment on the ledge outside—and away he flew. Although he had no wings, he just flew, like a bird. It seems as easy as anything, once you give it a chance.

If a nurse, or a policeman, or a burglar, or some other grown-up, had looked up into the dark sky, and had seen a baby in a nightgown flying above the roofs and chimney-pots, there would have been a lot of fuss. They would have fetched fire-escapes, and aeroplanes, and ladders, and invented extra large butterfly-nets with long handles, to try if they could not catch Peter and bring him safely down. Then, most likely, he would have been obliged to grow up : and so this tale would never have been told. But nobody happened to be looking up, in case there might be a flyaway baby. Peter Pan reached Kensington Gardens without any stop, and fluttered down upon the



KENSINGTON GARDENS ARE FULL OF DOGS, AND FAIRIES, AND CHILDREN

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

grass beside the Serpentine—as quietly as a little leaf might fall.

Kensington Gardens are great big places in London—so big that it would take years and weeks to tell you all about them, they are so full of trees, and flowers, and birds, and dogs, and fairies, and children. But, anyhow, just to give you some sort of idea—there is the Broad Walk (mostly for prams and hoops), and the Baby Walk, and lots of other walks ; some straight-on ones, which have been made, and others twisty, which have made themselves. These are the best, because you never know where they will take you. They have been formed as they went along-along, by children and dogs and others who don't care about a path being Just-so. Then there is the Round Pond, mostly for every kind of small sailing-vessel, except the tin sorts that you sail in the bath ; and the Serpentine, a large and lovely lake

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

where the fallen chestnut-blossoms pretend to be pink - and - white ships. Upon the Serpentine lies Peter Pan's Island ; but this is a very quiet secret place. It is where the birds are born who afterwards become baby boys and girls ; and nobody but Peter Pan is now allowed to land there. (If you wished to send him a message, you would write it in pencil on a bit of paper ; the spelling would not matter, as he has never learned the rights and wrongs of spelling. And you would make it into a paper boat, and drop it into the water. It would be sure to come to his Island at last.)

Well, now you see why Peter Pan could fly out of the window and over the house-tops. It was not so long since he had been a bird himself : and the place where his wings had been was still a trifle itchy now and then. Indeed, he still thought he was a bird, when he came down in Kensington Gardens.



HE STILL THOUGHT HE WAS A BIRD

He saw whole crowds of fairies about the place, and remembered who they were : but unluckily, fairies have such short memories, that they did not remember him at all. Partly, no doubt, because a baby boy in a nightgown is not a bit like a bird on the Serpentine Island : so the fairies can hardly be blamed for getting as scary as they did. Every fairy that Peter met, bolted like a frightened rabbit—some, one at a time, and some in a bunch. And he could hear them telling each other in squeaky voices that there was a Human Child in the Gardens after

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

Lock-Out Time : which is not allowed at all. It was enough to shock and startle any respectable fairy.

The same thing happened with the birds. Directly Peter flew up to talk to them, they made unhappy squeakings and flappings, and were gone in a twinkling. He could not understand it all : but presently he thought of trying what could be spoken to in the Island ; and there he found old Solomon Caw, the raven, who was on guard with one eye open : it was waste of time to use two, as nothing ever happened there. Peter told old Solomon about his adventures, and how the fairies and birds refused to know him. What *could* be the reason for such rudeness ?

“ Look at yourself,” said old Mr. Caw.

Peter looked. “ Well, what about it ? ” said he.

Solomon repeated, “ Sillykin ! Baby !



OLD SOLOMON CAW, THE RAVEN

Booby! Why, you have a nightgown and no feathers!”

Too true: that’s how it was: but Peter had never noticed it before. He had been much too excited.

“Now look at the birds,” said Old Solomon. “See any difference?”

It was very plain to see. The birds (all sleeping soundly) were dressed exactly opposite: they had feathers and no nightgowns. Peter felt extremely worried. What was he to do? He seemed to remember a kind lady who had lived somewhere else, and who was covered much like himself—I mean,

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

in a nightgown, without a single feather. He said, doubtfully, that he thought he would go back to Mother. But then he found, oh dear !—that he could no longer fly. He had used up all that was left of his flying—and now he would have to stay on the Island for always and always. He was no longer either a bird, or a proper Human Baby : but only (as old Solomon wisely told him), “a Betwixt-and-Between.” However, old Solomon was rather sorry for Peter, and promised to teach him birdish ways of getting across the water to Kensington Gardens. Otherwise he would have found it ever so dull on the Island : because it wasn’t a desert island, a treasure island, a pirate island, or anything but a hatching-place for birds who by and by would become real boys and girls.

The birds did not think much of Peter, he was such a funny shape : but they brought



IT AMUSED THE BIRDS TO SEE HIM LIFTING THE CRUSTS TO HIS MOUTH
WITH HIS HANDS

him bits of bread, and so on, by old Solomon's orders, as he simply refused to eat worms or insects, and said he would rather starve. It amused the birds ever so much to see him lifting the crusts to his mouth with his hands, instead of pecking properly with a beak. Thousands stood around to watch him at his meals. In return for the food, Peter gave them bits of his nightgown to line their nests, until he had nothing left worth putting on ; so he went about quite naked, and did not feel cold at all. He soon learned, too, how to build nests, and found himself most useful : indeed, he was always busy about something, or nothing, which was pretty much the same on the Island. And being so busy, kept him very happy and cheerful. As he couldn't sing his happy feelings half so well as the birds, he made himself a little pipe of reeds. He played on this most beautifully, without ever being taught : and he

became able to imitate the wind, and the fish plopping in the water, and the ripples lapping on the shore, so cleverly that even the birds were often deceived. And, I can tell you, it is by no means easy to deceive a bird. Not that anybody should ever try.

But there were times when Peter forgot he had a happy heart. Even the pipe-playing could not make him believe it. For he could see the lovely Kensington Gardens in the distance, and the children playing there : it all looked so very gay and jolly. And he cried now and then, because he would never be able to bowl a hoop, or run races with a dog, or fly a balloon with a string to it. Even supposing he ever was able to join the children in the Gardens, they might not like a Betwixt-and-Between without a rag or a feather to his back. It was certainly a sad state of affairs.

KENSINGTON GARDENS

Peter tried more than once to find out how swimming is done—but when he asked the ducks, they were too stupid to explain ; and when he asked the swans, they sniffed and hissed at him. Swans are too haughty for anything. So he was disappointed, and moped. But at last, one day, a perfectly glorious kite, with a tremendous long tail, which had escaped from its owner, came soaring overhead, and sank upon the Island. Peter, at first, was horribly frightened of it—but the birds told him what it was (they had seen others like it in the Gardens), and then he grew quite fond of it because it had once belonged to a real little boy. And he arranged with the birds to fly back to the Gardens, holding the kite by the string, while he hung on to the tail. It was a splendid idea, and the birds were quite eager to help. About a hundred of them took hold of the string—and off went Peter, kite, and all.

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

But before they had got over the water, there was a tearing papery noise—the kite came all to pieces—and a squawking terrified noise from the birds—and a *Splash* noise—which was Peter falling into the Serpentine. He insisted on being saved by two cross and sniffy swans : else he would certainly have been drowned.

So the Gardens remained as far away as ever.



THE GARDENS REMAINED AS FAR AWAY AS EVER

PRESENTLY, however, some good luck turned up for Peter. It was in the shape (as sometimes happens) of a Bank of England Five-Pound-Note. (Most likely you have never seen one, as they are rather rare—but it is a thinnish piece of crisp rustly paper, with an enormous Five in queer letters at the left-hand bottom corner.) A man who was fond of doing odd things, had made this note into a paper boat, to float it on the Serpentine : and so, like all other paper boats, it came ashore on the Island. Old Solomon Caw, though he was wondrous wise, couldn't make head or tail of it, never having seen one before. But he supposed it *must* mean that somebody wanted five

bird-babies all at once. People often sent messages to ask for one—a boy, or maybe a girl. But Five! “This is too much!” he exclaimed: and, rather than encourage such greediness, he said, “I shall take no notice of it!” and gave the Five-Pound-Note to Peter, to play with.

But Peter had more sense than to treat it as a toy. He had kept his eyes and ears open during the week before he left home: and he knew that this crinkly paper was really an enormous lot of money. Enough to make everyone on the Island rich for life (because birds use very little money, except magpies, who are misers, and hoard up coins whenever they can. Besides, there were no magpies there). So he explained to Solomon and the birds what a lot the paper boat was worth: and they felt rather foolish, to think that a Betwixt-and-Between should know so much

more than they did. However, afterwards they brightened up, when Peter called them together in a meeting, and offered to pay them sixpence a day each if they would build a nest large enough to hold him—a thrush's nest with a thick mud lining, to keep the water out. For he meant to use it as a boat. This was the biggest job the birds had ever tackled : but it pleased them so much, that they didn't bother about building their own nests, but set to work at once upon this wonderful nest-boat for Peter. He paid them regularly every evening, by cutting paper sixpences out of the Five-Pound-Note. The nest-building took a long time, a lot of twigs and grass, and heaps of mud. But at last it did get finished, and everybody was proud and happy as could be, chirping and cheering like mad. Peter then put up, for a sail, what was left of his nightgown ; and nobody was so unkind as to hint that it looked rather

nightgownish. But he waited till it was midnight and full moonlight, and till the birds were fast asleep, before he got into his beautiful boat and shoved himself out from the shore.

It was not all plain sailing, however : Peter had several uncomfortable adventures before he could reach the dear, delightful Gardens. The thrush's nest turned round and round, and he had no means of steering it. So he took in sail by taking off one nightgown-sleeve : and then he was floated along so fast that he got nearly wrecked against the bridge. And there were other dangers : too many to tell you : but by great good luck he escaped them all, and was just about to land on the Gardens shore, when he heard a shrill noise of shouting, and saw a crowd of small excited figures. This was the fairies bidding him to go back, for it was long past Lock-Out Time, and no Human was allowed to enter the Gardens now, "By Order."

KENSINGTON GARDENS

And they shook fists, and waved prickly holly leaves at him, and had such cross faces that anybody else but Peter might have turned tail. But Peter was nothing if not plucky : indeed, he was almost Don't-careish. "Go back ? Not much !" he thought. He explained, very carefully and politely, that he was not really a Human Baby, but a friendly little Betwixt-and-Between. And then he jumped ashore, without waiting to argue any more. The he-fairies at first were in two minds whether they should not kill him. Such a person was not safe to be there. But the she-fairies, who loved him at once, because he was very like a baby, wanted to cuddle him. In the end they took him to the Fairy Queen, who was able to understand the whole matter. She gave Peter leave to ramble in the Gardens whenever and wherever he liked : and she commanded the fairies to treat him kindly and see that he was kept comfortably.

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

But she was high and mighty, all the same, and much too proud to think of cuddling.

So there was Peter in the very place he had longed for all his life. It was very large, leafy, and lovely, and ever so interesting. Even better than he had expected, and that's saying a lot. And yet not quite *what* he had expected. Things never are. You see, he was now rather friends with the fairies, and could wander about in the Gardens, as much as he liked, all night. But at morning, when Lock-Out Time ended, and the Gardens were opened, and the children and nurses and dogs came pouring in—where was Peter then? Ah, where, you may well ask! Every morning, before it was quite light, he had to sail back to the Island: and his nest-boat was moored alongshore. For, after he had hidden in bushes for some days running, and watched the children at their games, he saw there was no hope that they would ever let him



HE WOULD MAKE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL MUSIC, WHILE THE FAIRIES
DANCED MADLY ROUND HIM

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

join in. A week-old Betwixt-and-Between wouldn't be wanted : he would be of no use to play at anything with them. And he could never grow any older, or any different to what he was now.

The long and the short of it is, that although Peter often picked up, at night, playthings which the children had lost by day (sometimes, as you may know, toys take a dislike to their owners, and suddenly disappear on purpose, so that they shall never be seen again)—well, Peter had no notion how to handle these playthings. He asked the birds, but they told him all wrong : and he asked the fairies, but they knew nothing. He thought, for instance, that a hoop, which he found, was a sort of pretence-boat—and let it sink in the Serpentine over and over again, just for the fun of wading in to rescue it. This much annoyed the hoop, which believed it had escaped for good and all, and

was now a free hoop to roll about wherever it chose. . . . And Peter thought a toy balloon, which was having sports by itself, was a ball. So he kicked it pretty hard : and it lay down and died. . . . He thought a child's wooden spade was a boat's paddle—and he used it for a paddle : it came in very handy. (The spade did not much object, as it was very weary of hard work on dry land.) But the proper use of toys, Peter had no chance of learning. Still, on the whole, he was ever so happy : one could easily be sure of that, just by hearing him play upon his reed-pipe. He would sit upon a mushroom or a toadstool, and make the most beautiful music, pretending he was a violinist and organist and pianist and all the other 'ists, while the fairies danced madly round and round him. Now and then, a tiny little sad note would come into his tunes—when he happened to remember what he was, and

KENSINGTON GARDENS

where he was, and where he had once been—a sort of Home-sweet-Home feeling. It never lasted long—but was very soft and sweet while it did last : so that elderly gentlemen, walking home by starlight, sometimes took Peter to be a nightingale.



IN THE DAYTIME THE FAIRIES ARE THERE

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

III

AS you may understand, the only people awake in Kensington Gardens at night are the fairies—and Peter Pan. The birds are asleep, in the trees and bushes, so they don't count : the children are asleep at home : the dogs are more-or-less asleep : and the nurses have gone to the pictures. (The flowers have different times for shutting-up,

PETER PAN IN

so they can be left out.) In the daytime, of course, the fairies are there, just the same, only they are almost invisible, because they pretend to be flowers. This is done very cleverly : the fairies are cunning little creatures. They dress exactly like whatever flowers are in season ; so that you might look at a crocus, or a hyacinth, or a lily, and never guess that it was really a fairy, because it stood quite still. Directly you left off looking, it would run away as fast as could be : but you would never think of turning round to notice this. You wouldn't suppose a fairy could be so sly. But, indeed, fairies are very tricky people. Everything they ever do is just a trick and a make-believe. This is because they are not quite exactly real themselves. They are just bits of a baby's laugh, which is rather difficult to explain ; but it's like this. When the first baby laughed for the first time, his

laugh broke up into thousands and thousands of little pieces, which went slithering and twinkling all over the world, and turned by and by into fairies. It is plain that they are not the same as you and I, and they can't be expected to know much ; in fact, they know next to nothing (except a few Fairy God-mothers, who are very scarce nowadays) : nor are they able to do anything sensible, though they always make out that they are frightfully busy. No fairy, even the God-mother-sort, ever gets much further than waving a wand, and then some magic may happen—or, again, it may not. They can dance, of course : but so can a daddylonglegs dance on a wall, or a gnat beside a brook. And they have parties ; very grand and gay these parties seem, all fuss and feathers : but you wouldn't think much of the refreshments. Too small, too few, and with not enough taste. Anyhow, that is what Peter

thought. The cowslip wine wasn't sweet, the cakes were so small there were no crumbs to them, and the ices—well, there were no ices. Considering he was only a Betwixt-and-Between, he had a good healthy appetite. He was not one to pick and peck at his food, as some folks do, or to turn up his nose at this and that.

For this poor-refreshments reason, and for other reasons too, Peter found himself growing rather tired of the fairies. They did exactly the same things too often: one knew too well what was coming. He felt sure that real Humans did different things, every now and then, just for a change, especially about party suppers. So, one night, when he had been piping extra well, and wishing extra hard that there was something really eatable on the fairy table-cloth, he was much pleased to hear the Fairy Queen call him to her side.

She said, "Kneel down, Peter. I am going

to reward you for playing so beautifully. I will give you the wish of your heart."

"I hope it will be nice food," thought Peter. He said aloud, rather doubtfully, "Thank you," but he was such a long time trying to remember what *was* the wish of his heart (in case there was no new food), that, by the time his knees were getting cramped, the Queen had nearly forgotten all about her promise. At last he asked, "If I said, I wish to go back to my mother, could you give me that?" Everyone was startled, and rather vexed: for they had never dreamed of Peter wanting to go away, and of course he would take his pipe with him: they would have to dance without his music, which would be dull indeed.

The Queen said scornfully, "Why don't you have a bigger wish than that? Such a skimpy little wish to ask for!"

Peter answered, "How big would a big

wish be, then?" The Queen spread out her skirt as wide as it would go, and said, "Well, something about that size."

"Oh!" said Peter, surprised. "Well, then—I would rather have two small skimpy wishes than one big one. I wish, first, to be able to fly back to my mother, and to be able to come back again if I don't care for it when I get there."

The fairies did not like this any better, but they had to pretend it was all right. Still, the Queen tried to make it sound very difficult. She told him, "I can make you able to fly, but I can't unfasten the door when you get there. It will be tight shut." Peter replied, "O, Mother always keeps the window open, the window where I flew out, in case I may come back to her." The fairies asked how he could know that: but he stuck to it that he did know. So his first wish had to be granted: the second one,

he kept a secret, thinking he might want it later on. The fairies now were ordered by the Queen to give him the power to fly : they came crowding round and tickled him on the shoulder-blades ; which soon began to itch, so that he called out, “ I say ! Stop ! ” and wriggled away from them. Then he felt that he could fly once more. And he had no wings ; but he just went up in the air, the way you do in dreams, and flew right away over the Gardens and the roofs. It was simply splendid to be flying again ! Peter enjoyed it so much, that he went a long way round, by the Crystal Palace, and London Bridge, and Regent’s Park, before he turned homeward to his mother’s window. It was odd how well he remembered the way.

YES, the window was wide open, as he had said : and he flew in ; and there lay his dear mother asleep in bed. She had a frilly nightgown, and wavy hair ; and she was ever so pretty. Peter sat on the wooden rail at the end of her bed, and looked at her a good while. Her arm lay outside the coverlet ; he could see it wanted a baby to hold in it. He patted the place where her feet were, and wondered if she would wake without being spoken to, or if he had better whisper “Mother !” And yet, strange as it seems, he could not quite make up his mind to wake her.

Wouldn't you think that he would throw himself down beside her, and cuddle up,

and say, "Darling Mother, here's your little boy back home again!" And O, what a joyful time they would have together! But Peter was not quite sure that it would be so nice to stay at home as he had hoped. The Home-sweet-Home feeling that he had when he was playing his pipe, seemed to have gone away for the present. What about clothes? Should he have to go back to night-gowns? He opened some drawers very quietly, and saw his baby-clothes lying there, neatly folded. "How does one get into them?" he said to himself, "and what's the good of them, anyway? It's quite comfortable with none at all." He took out a pair of socks—but they puzzled him, because he had forgotten if they were meant for hands or feet. He thought them rather silly. But while he was putting a sock on to one hand, to see how it felt, suddenly he was sure he heard his mother speak. And what she said

KENSINGTON GARDENS

was “Peter !” He sat quite still, listening. How ever could she tell he was there? Perhaps he had made a noise opening and shutting drawers. If she spoke again, he would jump up, and climb on the bed, and say all the loving words in the world. But she didn’t speak a second time; she only made little moaning noises ; and when he stole up to look, she was asleep again, with tears on her cheeks. She had been dreaming of her baby Peter, who had disappeared one night when he was a week old. She couldn’t think what had become of him—and that had made her cry.

Well, this sad sight made Peter unhappy ; but he was still uncertain what he really wanted to do. He went back to the rail at the end of the bed, and sat there and played his pipe to the poor lady. The music was very sweet, like a gentle lullaby, and

he saw that soon she looked happier. She was all right for the present.

“ Shall I stay to-night, and begin to be mother’s boy again ? ” thought Peter, “ or shall I just go back to the Gardens and say goodbye to Solomon and the rest ? I should so like just one more sail in my boat. And, of course, I should like to tell Solomon and the birds about this splendid adventure. . . . Yes, I’ll make haste there and back. I promise to come back ! ” he said in a loud whisper, just as if his mother could hear him promise.

But these were only excuses. He wanted more time to make up his mind. And he wanted to get his second wish from the fairies. He didn’t know yet what the second wish was : but it would be a pity to waste it. So, you must not think Peter was hard-hearted—but he was very young : and he liked the birds and the fairies, whom he

KENSINGTON GARDENS

knew, nearly as much as his mother, who was quite a stranger. He would have loved to kiss his mother—but then it might have wakened her. The best thing to do, at that moment, was to fly back to the Gardens. Away he flew. And still he said to himself, as he soared above the house-tops, “I mean to come home. I mean to come home to mother.”

He kept on saying this, after he had been back for weeks and months, and had said goodbyes to everybody and everything. He had one last sail in his boat, and then a really-and-truly last sail, and then more without any names to them. He went to a great many goodbye-parties, where he stuffed so, and got so excited, that he piped badly out of tune. He played his foolish upside-down games with lost playthings, and told his flying adventure to the fairies, over and over and over again. So that the fairies began to think

he had forgotten about his second wish, and would stay in the Gardens for good and all. . . . But he was careful not to say what he really had decided. And, in the end, the fairies were startled and disappointed, when he asked them, "Please tickle my shoulders again ; I want to go home to my mother now for always." He had dreamed that he saw his mother crying again : and as he had no doubt what she was crying for, he bravely said in his mind, "I will go home and make her happy. It is a shame to keep her waiting like this."

But when he reached his mother's window, it was no longer open. It was shut fast; and there were iron bars across it. And he could see his mother in bed, as dear and as pretty as ever—indeed, much dearer and prettier—with her arm around another little boy.

Peter had never had such a shock in his

KENSINGTON GARDENS

life. He sobbed, and shouted, and called—
“Mother ! Mother ! I am here ! I’ve
come back !” But she heard nothing. And
he kicked the iron bars, and banged with
his fists upon the windows : but he only
hurt himself, while the bars and windows
didn’t care a bit. So he had to return to
the Gardens; and it was he who did the
crying now, not his mother : they say that
dreams go by contraries. He had taken too
long to make up his mind : which shows
what may happen if you dawdle. For he
never saw that lovely lady any more.

Still, there were plenty of happy times
left : as I am going to tell you.

PETER PAN IN
KENSINGTON GARDENS

PART II

THE LITTLE HOUSE IN
KENSINGTON GARDENS

THE fairies don't bother to build houses for themselves, because it is easier to live in cosy little caves under tree-roots (the way field-mice live), or inside large flowers, or beneath big leaves. But once upon a time they built a house for a Human Child. It is the only one in the world that they have made: and it is not the least bit like any other house; because they put it up, just the same, every night, in some other part of Kensington Gardens. Always the same house, you see, but always in a different place. That is much more interesting than the common kind of house, which stays stuck in the same place for ever, so that the windows don't look out on anything new.

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

It was Maimie Mannering for whom the fairies built this house, to begin with. And this is why they did it.

Maimie Mannering was four years old, and her brother Tony was six. She was very proud of Tony, who she thought was ever so brave, and clever, and manly—almost a grown-up person, only with more sense than most grown-ups. Maimie, however, was braver at night than Tony, who was only brave by day, and she knew this, though she was too kind to say so. They were often in Kensington Gardens : and they had heard of Peter Pan, and of the fairies—only, of course, they had never seen them, because there is no Human, as you know, allowed in the Gardens after Lock-Out Time, and it is then that Peter and the fairies are out having high jinks. But Tony was a boy who rather bragged and boasted : and he most liked to brag that some day he meant to stay



MAIMIE AND TONY WERE OFTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

in the Gardens after the gates were shut, and see everything that was to be seen at night.

Maimie said, "O Tony, but the fairies will be angry with you!"

Tony answered, "Very likely they will. Who cares?" But this was only to make Maimie think him very wonderful: and so she did.

Tony went on to say that then he should get to know Peter Pan. "I shall know him quite well. Good old Peter!" said Tony.

"Perhaps he will take you sailing in his boat," remarked Maimie.

"I shall make him," said Tony. He swelled out his chest like a pouter-pigeon, spread out his hands, and took long strides, to show how don't-careish he was. Maimie thought he looked more manly than ever. It pleased and frightened her at the same time, when he said these things.

But you never can tell who may be

listening ; especially in Kensington Gardens—where there are fairies hiding all over the place, who prick up their ears at once if they are mentioned. And as it was, Tony and Maimie *were* heard talking, by a fairy who was out collecting skeleton leaves to make lace curtains. And she repeated their words to her family and friends : who were very much annoyed with Tony for having such bold unpleasant plans. The fairies now set to work to show him how vexed they were. They arranged a lot of small accidents to happen to Tony—such as pulling his bootlace undone, so that he tripped over it—and loosening the rails so that they gave way when he sat on them—and secretly getting the ducks to sink his boat on the Round Pond. But, as Tony did not know the reason of all these small accidents, he went on bragging and boasting of what he meant to do “some day,” about stopping in the Gardens at night.



NOT MANY PEOPLE WERE ABOUT THE PLACE

He never said "to-day," because then he would have had to do just what he boasted, and he was rather cross when Maimie kept wanting him to fix a day for staying in after Lock-Out. It was much safer to put it off, as well as much safer only to talk about it.

However, one afternoon Maimie and Tony were in the Gardens with their nurse. It was a cold winter day, with snow on the ground, and ice on the Round Pond. Not many people were about the place. Their nurse said she could not have the children

PETER PAN IN

dawdling here and there and perhaps getting a chill, they must just take a sharp walk : and when she looked at the notice-board to see what time the gates would be shut, it said half-past five. So they went up the Baby Walk, pretty fast, and still faster back again; but when they were once more beside the notice-board, the nurse was surprised to see that now it said five-o'clock for shut-up time. She thought she must have read it wrong at first. But Maimie and Tony knew much more about fairies than nurses and grown-ups can ever know. And they were sure the fairies had been playing tricks and had altered the hour on the board, because they wanted the place to themselves early to-night. This was really so : there was a big ball on, Peter Pan was to be the orchestra, and there would be more refreshments than usual, though not anything very tasty. Tony was sure he would never have a better chance

KENSINGTON GARDENS

to stay behind, than to-night; but he didn't quite make up his mind until he felt Maimie slip her warm hand into his cold one. He knew what she meant, "*Shall* you?"—and he nodded. But he felt rather pale, and was quieter than he should have been, considering that he was going to have a great adventure. Maimie very kindly took off her own scarf and gave it him. She said, "You might feel cold later on."

Tony felt quite cold enough already, indeed he was almost goosefleshy; and soon he began to think it was not a nice night to choose. He whispered, "I can't stay behind without nurse noticing me. I'm afraid I shan't be able to do anything this time."

Maimie never thought for a moment that her brave Tony was trying to find reasons for getting out of the adventure. She told him, aloud, "Tony, I'm going to race you to the gate," and she added in a low voice,

“Then you can hide.” They both started off running at once, and Tony went ahead so fast, that in the dusk she nearly lost sight of him. She thought he was in a hurry to find a good hiding-place—but O no, it was nothing of the sort! He had bolted right through the gate, and was tearing along, out in the road. Her brave big brother was nothing but a real cowardy-custard! Maimie was so shocked and disgusted, that her voice stuck in her throat, and she could not call after him to come back. She could only think, “Then I must hide instead.” And she ran to a little place near by, down some steps, called St. Govor’s Well, and hid there. It was not a place where anyone would have dreamed of looking for her. Too damp and dull.

The nurse, following slowly to the gate, could see Tony rushing along in front, and she thought Maimie was with him. So she

KENSINGTON GARDENS

passed out of the Gardens, and so did all the other people there. Nearly everyone wanted to get home before more snow fell. Everything became quite still, and chill, and empty. But Maimie, crouching down the steps of the Well, with her eyes shut, heard a *clang, clang, clang* noise sounding from different parts of the Gardens, and she knew, though she had never heard it before, that this was the Closing of the Gates.

WHEN the last *clang* had ended, Maimie heard somebody suddenly say, "So that's all right!" And, looking up, she saw an elm-tree which was stretching its arms and yawning.

Then another voice, which sounded as if the well-ladle were speaking, said, "I suppose it is a bit coldish up there?"—and the elm-tree flapped its arms and answered, "Well, one gets numb standing so long on one leg."

Maimie then found that several other big trees were yawning, stretching, and flapping too. She was enormously surprised. "I never knew trees could speak!" she thought. She seemed to have begun having adventures right away. It was quite exciting.

PETER PAN IN

She left the Well, and crept away to the Baby Walk, where she put herself under a large holly, and waited, with her eyes and ears wide open, wondering what in the world would happen next.

I have not yet told you what Maimie was like. She had a dear little face and curly hair : that was about all one could see of her, except her shoes and gaiters. The rest of her was mostly clothes : soft woolly ones inside, and a russet-coloured pelisse and hood outside. The hood and collar were trimmed with white fur. She had, indeed, so many clothes on, that she was as round as a ball. But the clothes kept her nice and warm. Some clothes are meant to keep you warm : but grown-ups do not know this.

She peeped out from under the holly, and saw the young trees going for their evening strolls. Some went one by one, some in pairs, arm in arm ; but they all used crutches :

KENSINGTON GARDENS

which were the sticks and stakes to which they had been tied. As they were in the habit of using crutches by day, they would have felt rather weak without any at night. They toddled and tottered, as it was : and the older trees hobbled like old people. Maimie would have liked to help them along : but she was too shy to offer.

Then she saw a little-boy-fairy who was running up the Walk, amusing himself with mischief, like a Human Boy—shaking the trees, and making the snow come down in showers off the branches upon the tiny plants below. The poor little plants shivered. You know how horrid it is to get cold wet stuff down the back of your neck, even if one is out snowballing. So Maimie called at him, quite loudly—“O, you naughty, naughty boy !”

It was a pity she spoke—the trees might not have noticed her if she had kept silent,

as they were busy about their own affairs. But a tall Chrysanthemum heard her call out, and stalked up towards her, looking grim and prim. "Hoity-toity!" said the Chrysanthemum, "what is this? Who is it? Where is it?" So she had to come out from under the holly; and the young trees gathered round her, fussing and twittering, and asked each other what they had better do. It was very puzzling for them—because no such thing had ever happened before, as a Human Child in the Gardens on a winter night. "This is all wrong," they told each other, "it simply isn't done." They whispered and nodded and shook their heads; at last one of them said to Maimie, "You know quite well you ought not to be here. It is no business of ours; but we think we shall be blamed if we do not report you to the fairies. What do you think about it?"

KENSINGTON GARDENS

Maimie answered, "I think you should *not* report me to the fairies. That would be carrying tales, wouldn't it?" The trees rather thought so themselves, but still they felt uneasy as to whether it would be more right to say nothing, or more wrong to carry tales. They wriggled to and fro uncomfortably, until Maimie said, "I want to go to the fairies' ball, of course: but first I should like to take each of you for a walk. You can lean on me, one at a time." This pleased the trees, for they were wobbly on their legs, and were only too glad of a little help. The sticks and stakes were all very well for standing still, but rather shaky when one used them for crutches.

So Maimie took them for walks, one tree at a time, up the Baby Walk and back again, holding them gently and politely, with an arm or a finger, until she got too tired to go on any more. You may wonder that she



SHE TOOK THEM FOR WALKS UP THE BABY WALK AND
BACK AGAIN

was not afraid of the talking walking trees; but, as has been said, Maimie was generally brave by night. The trees, however, now that they had such a dear little person to

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

help them along, did not wish to let her go. They warned her that it was most unsafe for her to be seen by the fairies. "They will make you stay here for ever to amuse their children," said a spindle-tree. "They will turn you into something tiresome and ugly," said a filbert. "They will very likely kill you with splinters of ice," said a lilac.

But Maimie was growing braver every minute ; and she only replied, "Don't care !" This was unladylike, of course ; but she was rather bored by taking walks with the trees. She waved her hand and said, "Good-bye, for the present," and off she ran. She had seen red ribbons stretched along the snow, which were put to show the fairies the way to the ball. She walked along by one of those ribbons for some time : and when a procession of fairies passed her, riding on the ribbon-track, she managed to hide by bending her knees and stretching out her arms, and

pretending to be a garden chair. They were much upset about something, or they certainly would have seen that this was no chair.

The fairies did not even turn their heads to look at Maimie; which is why the garden-chair make-believe was quite all right. They were too cross to look at anybody or anything, but just went straight on following their noses, which were turned up in the air so much that some fairies had to fly a little instead of walking.

Maimie partly guessed the cause of this crossness, for the young trees had explained to her about it. The Duke of Christmas-Daisies, one of the most important people at the Court of the Fairy Queen, had a curious illness the matter with him. Some Human grown-ups have the same thing, and some persons in fairy-tales—it is called Cold-Heart. No child ever has it, though Cold-Feet are



THEY JUST WENT STRAIGHT ON, FOLLOWING THEIR NOSES

not uncommon, even among the youngest. . . . Well, the Queen's doctors, all very wise and serious, were trying to cure the poor Duke of this horrid illness. It was not only very uncomfortable for him, but it prevented him from taking a fancy to any of the lovely lady fairies, so that he did not wish to marry : and in Fairyland that is a sad state of things. The Duke came from the East, and had travelled in many lands; but whenever he met a particularly beautiful creature, his own private doctor, who always went about with him, would rush up and touch the Duke's heart with his tiny thermometer (you know, the sort that you are given in your mouth when you are ill)—and the Duke would pretend that his frozen heart felt just as if it were going to melt. But it never did : and each time the doctor had to turn round and blink through his spectacles, and say sorrowfully, "Cold, quite cold !"

One of the reasons for the great Fairy ball to-night was to give the poor Duke another chance of thawing his heart. Of course the Queen could not have known it would be an extra cold night: so she had invited all the most charming young-lady-fairies in the Gardens, hundreds and dozens of them, and had commanded that red ribbon roads should be laid everywhere if it were snowy or muddy, to keep their dear little dancing-shoes clean. Fairies think such a lot of dancing, you know: and although they forget the steps when they are gloomy, they remember directly they get gay again. That is why fairies never say "We feel happy," but "We feel *dancey*." It is nearly the same thing, as I am sure you must have noticed. Happiness gets into one's feet very easily.

Well, this heart-business was making the guests at the ball not only disappointed,

but perfectly sour and snappish. One after another, the most exquisite fairies had been brought before the Duke : the sort that in the summer might be easily mistaken for roses, jasmine, lilac, or love-in-a-mist. Each time the Duke had looked at them with a dreary face, and eyes like what you see on a marble slab at a fishmonger's : and each time the doctor had popped his head down against the Duke's heart. Sometimes he held a dandelion watch there, and sometimes a thermometer : it didn't seem to matter which, for the end was always the same, "Cold, quite cold !" Then the lovely ladies would be led away, some shedding pink tears, and some as cross as two sticks ; and some who were so vexed that they wouldn't stay at the ball another minute, but went straight home in a huffy temper, snorting with rage, like those which Maimie had just seen. For, of course, it *is* annoying,

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

if a beautiful fairy girl has been quite certain she will soon be Duchess of Double-Daisies, to be treated as if she were no more than a bit of dried grass.



A BEAUTIFUL FAIRY GIRL

IN a short time, Maimie, as she followed the red ribbon, heard a feeble whimpering noise : and she found that a little fairy, trying to cross a ribbon-bridge over a dry puddle, had fallen off into the puddle and couldn't get out. Maimie rescued her, kindly but gingerly, for she was nervous lest the fairy might break, never having handled one before. The fairy, too, was frightened at first ; but soon she got over her shyness, and sat quite friendly in Maimie's hand, chattering away like a sparrow. It was rather jolly for her to be able to talk to such a nice child as Maimie. She said, she was only a small shabby street-singer, and her name was Brownie. But she had been on her way to the ball, in case



CERTAINLY PLAINER THAN MOST FAIRIES

she *might* be able to melt the Duke's Cold-Heart, though it wasn't likely in the least. "You see," said the simple little creature, "I am rather plain," and Maimie could not well say "O no, you are very pretty," for Brownie was certainly plainer than most fairies. Not *ugly*, you know, but not anybody one would look at twice. There are plenty of flowers like that.

It was uncomfortable for Maimie, who was very truthful, and who wanted to make Brownie feel hopeful. However, she told

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

her little friend some stories about people who were not a bit grand, but homely and shabby (such as Cinderella), who always married Princes in the end. Brownie was quite cheered-up by these tales, and soon she hurried off along the ribbon-road. She advised Maimie not to follow her : it might be most unsafe, she said. But, of course, Maimie was feeling braver all the time : and when Brownie was out of sight, Maimie crept after to the ballroom, and hid behind a big tree, quite dazzled by the brightness of the Fairy Ring. This was lighted from outside by thousands of glow-worms holding on to each other : and from inside, by the shining of the fairies themselves.

There sat the Fairy Queen, all sparkling and glistening, and there was the dismal Duke of Christmas-Daisies, with his doctor close at hand. There were the deliciously-pretty fairy ladies who were being brought

PETER PAN IN

to speak to him, full of smiles and sweet looks—in hopes to thaw his Frozen Heart ; all of them making a bad job of it, and weeping or flouncing away. But where was Peter Pan ? Maimie couldn't see him anywhere : the one person she wanted most. It was most disappointing. There was nobody to tell her that Peter's boat had got stuck in the floating ice-floes on the Serpentine, where it took him a long while to break through with his wooden-spade paddle. So the fairies had not yet begun to dance—first because Peter was late, and next because they all felt so very undancey that evening.

The crowds of sight-seer fairies outside the Court enclosure, thousands and thousands of them, suddenly burst out laughing. This was because Brownie had just arrived, and was telling them she must be taken to the Duke at once. And she was such a simple, homely, quiet little thing—it was quite silly

KENSINGTON GARDENS

of her, they told her, to expect that *she* could be any use, when all the glorious glittering girls had failed. But Brownie stamped her little foot, saying, "Lead me to the Duke, this directly-minute, I say! Now! Do it now!" And everybody was so surprised, that they gave in, and she was led before His Grace.

The Doctor scarcely noticed her: he was getting tired of so many girls. He was just putting a finger on the Duke's heart, and beginning to say what he had been repeating, like a parrot, for hours, "Cold, qui—" but before he could finish, he started and cried, "What's this?"

He laid his ear to the Duke's heart—and he cried out "Bless my soul!" The fairy crowds became ever so excited—they pushed and hustled and scrambled round to see what was happening. And they stared with round eyes at the Duke of Christmas-

Daisies, who looked frightened out of his wits.

“ Good gracious me ! ” exclaimed the Doctor. He pulled away his fingers from the Duke’s heart, and sucked them, for they had got scorched. He bowed low, and said, stammering with joy, “ My Lord Duke, I have the honour to tell you that your Grace’s heart is not only thawed, not only melted, not only warm—but it is Burning Hot. I might say, it is on fire ! ”

Then the Duke and Brownie jumped into each other’s arms. So did the Queen and her Lord Chamberlain. So did all the lords and ladies ; for in the Fairy Court, everything is a game of Follow-my-Leader ; and everybody shouted “ Hooray ! ”

O, wasn’t it happy and glorious ! The crowds went perfectly wild, cheering and shouting, and feeling dancey all of a sudden. There was a noise of trumpets (but no Peter-



FEELING DANCEY ALL OF A SUDDEN

Pan-pipe) and of singing and handclapping, and everything was more delightful than ever it had been before—when a most unexpected sound put a stop to it. All Maimie's fault. Maimie grew *too* brave, which is the same thing as being too excited—and couldn't help crying out in great joy :

“O Brownie, how perfectly splendid !” As she said this, she took several steps forward, into the full glare of the Fairy Ring—and threw out her arms, meaning to hug Brownie, who had forgotten all about her, and was busy hugging the Duke.

Oh, my goodness me ! *What* a foolish, excitable thing to do ! The lights went out that moment : the music left off. The dancing crowds stood still, and there was nothing left but cold, darkness, silence, and a very lonely place. And Maimie remembered, too late, that she was a Human Child in a place where a Human Child had no business to be. The fairies would never forgive her. She heard a humming sound, which might have been wind in telegraph wires, or it might be thousands of angry fairies growling horrid threats against her. Her braveness went out like a burst bubble—she squeaked with fear like any mouse : and she turned and took to her heels, and ran, and ran, and ran.

MAIMIE went on running, and falling down, and picking herself up again—until she was quite worn out. Indeed, she was so frightened, and so tired, that she couldn't remember whereabouts she was. If somebody had come up and asked her the way to somewhere, she would have said, "I'm sorry, but I'm a stranger in these parts," having forgotten even the name of Kensington Gardens. All she did know was, that she had got to keep on running. However, no one can keep on running for ever, especially in twisty paths in a dark snowy place: and at last Maimie tripped-up and slipped-down, and then just lay where she fell. She was fast asleep, and dreaming,

before she could get up again. She thought the snowflakes touching her face were her mother giving her good night kisses ; she thought that the coverlet of snow, which soon rested upon her, was an extra blanket which some person had kindly put. And she thought she heard her father and mother talking to each other, in low tones close by her : but fortunately she never guessed that it really was the fairies.

Of course they had caught up with her. One Human Child running about wildly in a place it doesn't know, is no match for thousands of fairies who live there. They had followed her, troops and troops of them ; and they couldn't help thinking how silly she was, and feeling very pleased with themselves that *they* were not Humans. But, which is good news, they were not now meaning to do her any harm, nor to put any bad magic on her. Quite the

contrary. They wanted to praise her like anything.

When first she had upset the whole Fairy Ring by rushing out from behind the tree, there was a fearful row, quite a riot—and nearly every fairy there had cried out that she must be killed, or turned into a toad, or thrown to the swans, and so on. But she had one friend—which was Brownie, who should now be called the Duchess of Christmas-Daisies. Brownie dropped on her knees before the Queen, and begged for Maimie's life to be spared, as a wedding-present to herself. "Every bride has the right to ask a favour," said Brownie anxiously; "this is mine."

The Queen replied, "Anything except that." All the fairies (they are shocking copy-cats) at once exclaimed—"Anything except that!" But Brownie was a good little creature to begin with, and much better

now she was a Duchess. She wouldn't take No for an answer. She explained how kind Maimie had been, saving her out of the deep puddle, comforting her and cheering her up, and behaving like a real friend, although they had never met before. "If it had not been for her," said Brownie, "I should not be here now; and my dear Duke's heart would have stayed frozen for good and all. Fancy that!"

Then the Queen changed her mind, and said, "Let Maimie live!"—and all the thousands of fairies echoed "Let Maimie live!" And they put themselves into a grand procession, to go and thank the Human Child, and offer it hearty thanks and some particularly nice party refreshments.

But when they found Maimie lying deep in snow, they could not make her hear a word of the speech of thanks, nor waken her to have any refreshments. They whispered

“Cake !” — “Honeydew !” — “Cowslip Wine !” and so on, in her ear ; but they could not rouse her at all. And they became afraid that she might perish of cold, because, as fast as they cleared the snow off her, it came down and covered her again.

Then they tried to lift and carry her to a more sheltered spot ; but, what with clothes, and roundness, and snow, she was much too heavy for the fairies. The softer-hearted fairies began to shed tears : but the little-boy fairies, who never lose heart, suddenly had a grand idea. They said, “Why not build a house around her ?” It really was a lovely plan. Everybody clapped hands and cheered. The order was given, “Let it be done at once !” And in a shorter time than it takes to tell you, the House was up ! For if there are armies of fairy carpenters, and bricklayers, and plasterers, and plumbers, and tilers at work, things get finished much more

quickly than where there are only two men and a boy, and perhaps one man has gone home to fetch his bag.

It was the sweetest little House you ever saw. It exactly fitted Maimie, right over her and all round her. One of her arms had been a bother, because it was sticking out awkwardly : but the fairies built a veranda over it, which looked extremely nice. The roof was beautifully made ; it was quite a pity to think that she would have to knock it off when she woke, for of course she couldn't get out through the door : the doors and windows were quite doll's-house. Still, the roof was made to open like a box-lid, though this could not be seen, it was so cleverly done. Everything was as pretty and as perfect as the builders could contrive it. All sorts of odds and ends were added ; the fairies thought of some new thing every other minute. There was no room for any

KENSINGTON GARDENS

furniture inside, because Maimie took up every inch of space : so they made things as complete as possible outside, ending up with a little garden in full bloom, and roses growing up the house-walls, and a kitchen-garden, and a rain-water butt. Nothing could possibly be nicer.

Then the fairies went back again to their dance, as pleased as Punch. They kissed their hands to the Little House as they marched off, and a glow-worm left himself there for a night-light. But Brownie, who was the last of all to go, dropped a dear little dream down the chimney, hoping it would not melt before Maimie had enjoyed it. It was very like a pink strawberry ice-cream, to look at.

THE Little House kept Maimie safe and warm, all night : and the pink dream lasted her till the morning. Then she awoke—more or less—and supposed she was at home in her own little bed. She called out “ Tony ”—but nobody answered. So she sat up—and that knocked the roof off. And she saw, all round her, what looked like miles and miles of snow and trees. Not a bit like her night-nursery, which had pictures on the walls and no snow in it. Then she looked at herself ; and behold, she had her out-door things on, hood and tippet and all ! And where in the world was Tony ?

Maimie thought, “ This must be a dream,” but she pinched her cheeks to make sure.

And then she began to remember everything that had happened. She could see that she was still in the middle of a wonderful adventure ; there might be lots more to happen yet. She got out very carefully through the open roof, which had not come right off, as it was hinged like the lid of a box. She stepped over the flowering garden—and then she was able to turn and look at the beautiful Little House which had sheltered her all the night. She had never seen such a sweet little building. Nobody ever had.

“O you dear !” she cried. “O you sweet ! O you perfect darling !” The Little House was quite too good to be true.

Now, as you may have noticed, it often upset things and put them wrong when Maimie spoke to them : goodness knows why it should. Anyway, it did now. The Little House did not come to pieces, or disappear all of a sudden. It was not the

KENSINGTON GARDENS

instant vanishing-away kind of House which is generally put up by fairies. Indeed, it is the only one of its kind in the world—the shrink-away sort. When it heard Maimie speak, it began to shrink at once. It grew smaller and smaller every minute. First, it shrank to the size of a dog-kennel: next, it was about as large, or as little, as a Noah's Ark. And yet Maimie could see everything just as it had been, only very, very tiny; the roses on the walls, the rain-water butt, and the rest. When it had got down to the smallness of a cotton reel, Maimie felt afraid it was about to shrivel up altogether. "O, dear, dear Little House, don't go!" she called out. But perhaps she spoke too late: for the next moment it had gone—the snow had covered it completely. Not a sign of it was left. No one could have believed it ever had been there.

Maimie began to blub; can you wonder?

She was just feeling very lonely and miserable when she heard a voice saying kindly, "Don't cry, little Human Child ! Please don't cry." She jumped round, and saw a pretty little naked boy, close beside her, looking at her with a friendly air.

She was sure at once that this must be Peter Pan.

AS it was now morning, Maimie was not particularly brave any longer: I told you that her braveness only came on at night. She looked rather shyly at Peter, wondering how she should begin to speak to him.

Peter was delighted to have a real Human Child to talk to. No such luck had ever come his way before. He behaved, however, as if he had been in the habit of talking to little girls all his life—and was not in the least shy. He said politely, “I hope you slept well?”

“Yes, thank you,” said Maimie, “I was very warm and comfy. Besides, you see, I have my winter things on. But weren’t

you cold?" She stared at his fat bare body.

"I don't think so," replied Peter, "but I'm not quite sure what cold is."

"What a funny boy!" said Maimie, and she giggled.

"Well," said Peter, trying to explain, "I am not exactly a boy. I am a Betwixt-and-Between. At least, that is what old Solomon Caw calls me, and he knows everything."

"O, is that so?" she asked, surprised. "You are a Betwixt-and-Between?"

"I don't mean that that's my name," he told her. "My really-truly name is Peter Pan."

"Yes, I know, of course," said Maimie. "Everybody knows about you."

This pleased Peter more, perhaps, than he had ever been pleased before. For, to tell the truth, he was a vain, conceited creature. He cleared some snow off a fallen tree, and he and Maimie sat there, closely

squeezed together. He asked Maimie to tell him exactly what people knew about him, and what they said. "Don't leave out any of it," he begged her. "I want to hear it all."

So she told him as much as she could think of, and he saw that people knew a good lot about him, but not quite everything. That part of his history about going back to his mother and finding the window shut and another little boy there, was not mentioned at all : of which Peter was glad, for he still felt rather ashamed about it.

He asked, "Do people know that I can play real games, just like other boys? I should like them to know that. You see, I have had to teach myself entirely."

Maimie looked at him, and thought, "This can't be true. How could he possibly play cricket, or rounders, or anything?" She got him to tell her about his games, and of course

they were absurd—such as sailing a hoop on the Round Pond, and using the toy balloon for a football. She hated to distress him, but she was obliged to say, “Peter, all your ways of playing are quite wrong. They are not a bit the way boys would play them. You can’t have taught yourself right.”

Peter burst into tears. He was badly disappointed. For he had always felt extraordinarily conceited about being like a real boy in *some* things. He very seldom cried : but it was most distressing to watch him, especially for a kind little person like Maimie. She wiped his eyes with her own handkerchief, and put an arm round him : she was very sorry for him in his disappointment. Peter sobbed and blubbed. “Shall I give you a kiss ? ” she asked him presently. Peter said chokily, “Thank you,” but he had no idea what she meant, and held out his hand. He thought she was going to put something

KENSINGTON GARDENS

into it. Poor Maimie was dreadfully startled at this ; but, not wanting to hurt his feelings by explaining, she fished out a little silver thimble which happened to be in her pocket, and said, "There, dear," so as to pretend it was a kiss. And Peter does not know the difference between a kiss and a thimble, not to this very day !

He fitted it on to one finger after another. It cheered him a lot, and he soon stopped crying. He could change very quickly from sad to glad, and, now that he felt much better, he began to brag and boast, even worse than Tony—all about his wonderful adventures. It was lovely to have somebody there to listen, who had never heard them before. Especially as the birds were getting rather tired of them, and sometimes sharply told Peter to shut up. But to Maimie, of course, they were all new and amazing. Nothing like them had ever been told her, by Tony

or anyone else. The adventure that she fancied most, was the one which was going on still—Peter's voyages between the Island and the Gardens, in the thrush's nest which had been built by the birds to hold him.

"How splendid!" cried Maimie; and she looked at Peter with large shining eyes.

"Could Tony do that, do you think?" said Peter. She had told him all about Tony, and her home, and her nurse, and the rest of it, but Peter did not understand half the words she used; though he had to pretend he did. He was very good at pretending.

Maimie said, "O no, Tony could never go sailing to and fro like that. He would be afraid. Besides, he hasn't had much to do with boats."

Peter said, "What is 'afraid'? O, I wish I was as brave as Tony!"

She saw that he had quite mistaken her—and replied, "Why, you are quite the bravest

boy I ever knew ! Thousands of times braver than Tony ! ”

When Peter understood that Maimie really meant what she said, he hooted with joy, and all his disappointment about the games turned into conceitedness—so that he could almost be seen swelling with it, especially his head. He was all over smiles and pleasedness.

“ And if you would like to give me a kiss, you can,” said Maimie.

Peter began to wiggle the thimble off his fat finger—very unwillingly—he thought she wanted him to give it back. He seemed downcast and gloomy about it.

“ O no, I didn’t mean a kiss,” she exclaimed. “ I meant, give me a thimble.”

“ What’s a thimble ? ” said Peter, puzzled.

“ This is a thimble,” she replied—and she kissed him.

“ O, I see,” said Peter. “ Yes, I should

like to give you a thimble.” So he gave her several thimbles, slowly and gravely. He did it very well, too, considering it was the first time he had ever tried. It is often said that people never know what they can do until they have tried.

WHEN Peter had given Maimie quite a lot of thimbles, or as we should call them, kisses—perhaps seven altogether, or it might even be eight—he thought how nice it would be if she lived in the Gardens altogether. He said, “Look here, Maimie, suppose you marry me?”

Maimie had been thinking much the same thing; because it seemed a pity that Peter should go on having adventures all to himself. Quite a waste of them, indeed. So she answered, “I should like to marry you, ever so—but would there be room enough for me in the boat?”

“O yes, certainly,” said Peter, “if you don’t mind being squeezed a bit.”

“What about the birds? Would they mind?”

“They would just love to have you,” he replied. “Besides, as you can see, there are very few birds about in winter. The only bother is,” he added uncomfortably, “they might want your clothes.”

“Want my clothes!” cried Maimie. “Whatever for?”

“Well, you see, there are bits of your clothes that would come in so very useful for their nests,” and he touched her fur collar. “Nice soft stuff,” he went on, stroking it. “They would want this badly. I know they would.”

Maimie replied, as near crossly as she could, “Well, they won’t get it.”

“No, they mustn’t get it,” said Peter, still stroking the collar. And then he burst out, “O Maimie, I believe the reason I’m so fond of you is because you are just like

a beautiful nest. So round, and soft, and warm, and cosy— Yes, you are very like a nest, though I don't remember which nest."

This rather annoyed Maimie. She said, "Nonsense, Peter. Don't be so silly. You are talking as if you were a bird, and not a boy. Of course, you are only a Betwixt-and-Between. But I'm *not* a nest at all, and I don't mean to be one, not ever. I had rather be a Betwixt-and-Between myself, any day."

"Then come and be one, dear Maimie!" he replied.

This soothed her; and they walked off towards the Serpentine and Peter's boat. As they went, he whispered, "Quite true, you are not the least bit like a nest. Don't let that worry you. I do say such silly things sometimes—I can't think why." So Maimie was pleased, and forgave him for his foolish words.

But as they were getting near the water, it looked very icy and un-home-like, and Maimie was wanting her hot breakfast and the nursery fire. She gave a little shiver, and said, "Of course, it isn't as if I were saying good-bye for ever to Mother and Tony, is it? I shall go and see them quite often, shan't I?"

"O yes, of course," said Peter; but he was very doubtful about it. Only he was now so fond of her, he was afraid of losing her if he told her the truth, which was that she would never get back home again once she became a Betwixt-and-Between. He made her walk faster, lest she should have time to change her mind: and whenever she seemed inclined to dawdle or to stop, he gave her another thimble.

When she had seen the boat, and admired it quite as much as he had hoped she would, she was still a little uncertain. She said

KENSINGTON GARDENS

again, "You know, Peter, that I shouldn't come unless I was quite really-truly sure I can go back home to Mother whenever I choose?" She looked straight at Peter, but she saw that he could not look her in the face.

He said grumpily, "O yes, that will be all right. But are you sure your mother will want *you*?"

"Why, of course she will!" cried Maimie, astonished at such a question.

"She might not care for a Betwixt-and-Between," Peter felt obliged to warn her. He was a truthful boy.

"Why shouldn't she? *I* do!" replied Maimie, "I care for you!"

"But suppose you found the door barred?" he said uneasily.

"The door will always be open," answered Maimie, "and Mother will always be waiting there for me. Always!"

PETER PAN IN

“O, very well, then,” said Peter, rather huffy, “if you are so sure as all that, come along. Step in,” and he gave her a helping hand into the boat.

“Peter,” said Maimie, taking his arm, “why won’t you look at me? Whatever is the matter?”

Peter pulled himself away and scrambled ashore; he sat down on the snowy bank, where he hid his face in his hands and made unhappy noises.

Maimie climbed ashore after him, and asked him what was the trouble?

He cried, “O Maimie, it isn’t fair to take you to the Island, if you really believe you can get back to your mother. You don’t know mothers as well as I do. Listen here.” And he then let out what he had kept secret all this while, how he had been barred out and his mother had comforted herself with another little boy. It was a very sad story.

KENSINGTON GARDENS

Peter gulped, and Maimie gasped, all the time he was telling it.

“But *my* mother wouldn’t——” began Maimie.

“All mothers are the same,” said Peter; “I dare say she has already written to Solomon Caw to send her another little girl by return of post.”

At this moment a creaking and a clanking were heard, all round Kensington Gardens. The Gates were being opened. Peter made haste into his boat, and Maimie got ready to rush home through the nearest gate. “O Peter,” she sobbed, “suppose I should be too late as it is! Suppose she has got another little girl already.”

“In that case,” said Peter, “I shall be waiting for you here to-night. But I think you will be in time if you run for it now.”

They gave each other one last hug and one more thimble, and Maimie scuttered away

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

like a chicken. Peter put his hands over his eyes that he might not see her go. It was much worse for him than for her, you know. For she had got her mother, and Tony, and home, and nursery fire, and breakfast—but Peter had nearly next to nothing. He waited about in the Gardens, that night and many other nights, hoping and hoping that somehow she might come back to him ; but she never did. For one reason, she thought that if she ever saw her dear Betwixt-and-Between again, she would not be able to leave him, he led such a lonely life there all by himself. The second reason was, her nurse kept a sharp look-out on her—so that there never was the slightest chance of her hiding in the Gardens at Lock-Out Time. And there was a third reason—but at the moment I have forgotten it.

YOU may be sure that Maimie told all these strange adventures to her mother and to Tony ; and every time she told them, she remembered a little bit more. They were inclined to say she had dreamed it all—but when they found that her thimble was missing, they thought there was certainly something very odd about the whole affair. Maimie talked, indeed, so often and so lovingly about Peter that Tony sometimes felt as if his nose had been put out of joint—a very uncomfortable feeling which I hope will never happen to you. But Tony was a nice boy, and did not show any jealousy, if he had any. Though now and then he wished Maimie would talk of anybody else except Peter, just for a change.

She learned to knit, so that she might make presents for Peter : the first thing she made was a kettle-holder. But afterwards she thought he would rather have something which would move about ; a kettle-holder is so very quiet and still. Her mother, who was a most clever and sensible lady, said, "How would he like a goat to ride ?"

"A goat !" cried Maimie. "Why, that would be lovely for him ! He could sit on the goat and play his pipe as he went along !"

"Could he stick on, do you think ?" said Tony.

"He could do Anything," said Maimie, so proudly that Tony was abashed. "But where can I get a goat ?" she continued, looking bothered.

"You can give him yours," replied her mother, "you know, the make-believe one that you try to frighten Tony with."

Maimie was taken aback to find that her

KENSINGTON GARDENS

mother knew about the make-believe goat. She thought it was a secret. What had usually happened was this—that, if she were vexed with Tony, she pretended to be a goat, that would run at him and shove him with its feet and butt him with its horns. And she could pretend so well, that Tony was never quite sure if she could turn herself into a goat or not. The sleepier he was at night, the less sure he was whether it was a real goat or only Maimie. So he was glad to think the make-believe goat was going to be given away.

“But it isn’t a real goat,” said Maimie. “How can I give it to Peter when it’s not there?”

“It’s real enough,” muttered Tony, though he was rather ashamed about it.

“I know how to manage it,” said her mother. So they all three went to Kensington Gardens next day, and hunted about till they

PETER PAN IN

found where a fairy ring had been (it takes sharp eyes to find one), and Maimie was put to stand alone inside it.

Her mother then said the words which had been arranged—they were a sort of very mild magic—

“ My daughter, tell me, if you can,
What have you brought for Peter Pan ? ”

and Maimie answered, as she had been taught—

“ I bring a goat for him to ride,
Look, here I fling it far and wide ! ”

Then she threw her arms all round, as if she were sowing something, and turned round three times with her eyes shut.

“ Well, that’s that ! ” said Tony, very glad the goat was gone.

Maimie also left a little note, explaining to Peter about her present, and telling him

KENSINGTON GARDENS

that he must ask the fairies to change the make-believe goat into a real one. The fairies were delighted to do so. They were deeply interested, and changed the goat at once : so that now Peter rides on it every night, to and fro and hither and thither in the Gardens, making charming music on his pipe. When he is not riding, he is lying in the grass kicking his heels in the air, as jolly as he can possibly be. It is a gay life that he leads now, what with the boat, the pipe, the goat, and the fairies. The best of it is, it will go on like that for ever, because Peter will never grow up.

As for the Little House, it is not, as you might suppose, down and done-with. For every night (except ball-nights, when they are far too busy), the fairies build it again in some fresh part of the Gardens, in case there should be a lost child left inside after Lock-Out Time. Sometimes there is ; and



PETER RIDES ON IT EVERY NIGHT

Peter picks it up and carries it on his goat to the Little House, and there it sleeps safely all night, and wakes up and gets out through the roof in the morning—just as Maimie did. But it has been said that no Little House is quite so beautiful as the first one, though it is made after the same pattern. To go by what one hears from children who have spent a night there, it is very pretty, very sweet—but somehow not

PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

exactly the same as Maimie's. I wonder if the fairies have been building in a hurry, and have left out something or other lately? Perhaps they have forgotten the water-butt.

THE END

